

Remarks

This is in response to the final Office Action dated January 6, 2006. Claim 20 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claim 1 is amended. Claims 1-8 and 16-19 remain pending. Reconsideration is requested in view of the following remarks.

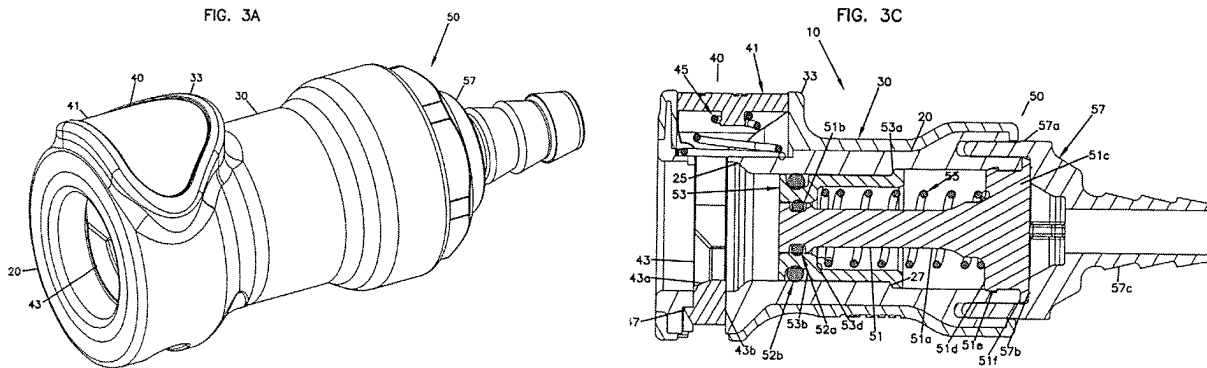
Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, and the correctness of the rejection is not conceded.

It is respectfully suggested that one skilled in the art would understand that example overmold portion 30 disclosed in the present application forms a molecular bond with coupler body 20. See Application, p. 10, ll. 1-4. In any event, claim 20 is canceled herein to move the application into condition for allowance. Reconsideration and removal of the rejection are therefore requested.

Claims 1-8 and 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Carstens (U.S. Patent No. 4,863,201). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration in view of the following comments.

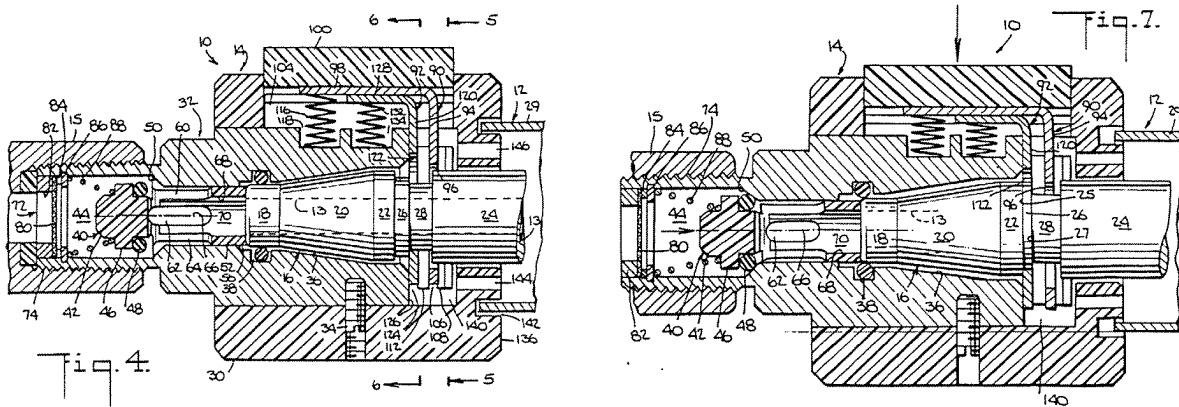
Claim 1 recites an overmold portion including a shroud portion partially covering said outer member of said latch assembly, said shroud portion being a wall extending outward from the outer sidewall and adjacent and around said outer member of said latch assembly, said wall extending in a direction transverse to said outer surface, and a top portion of said wall protruding from said outer surface at least a same distance as an outermost portion of said outer member protrudes from said outer surface.

One example embodiment of an overmold portion with a shroud portion configured as recited by claim 1 is shown in Figures 3A and 3C of the present application, reprinted below.



Application, Figs. 3A and 3C. Example overmold 30 includes shroud portion 33 that extends transversely outward from outer sidewall 21, and is disposed adjacent slot 26. In example embodiments, a top portion of shroud portion 33 protrudes at least a same distance as an outermost portion of latch assembly 40 to partially cover and protect latch assembly 40. Application, p. 9, ll. 2-11.

In contrast, a top portion of coupling member 14 disclosed by Carstens does not protrude from coupling body 32 at least a same distance as an outermost portion of button 100, as shown below.



Carstens, Figs. 4 and 7. In other words, an outermost portion of button 100 extends a greater distance from coupling body 32 than a top portion of coupling member 14, even when button 100 is depressed as shown in Figure 7.

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For at least these reasons, Carstens fails to disclose or suggest a top portion of said wall protruding from said outer surface at least a same distance as an outermost portion of said outer member protrudes from said outer surface, as recited by claim 1. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 1, as well as claims 2-8 and 16-19 that depend therefrom, are therefore respectfully requested.

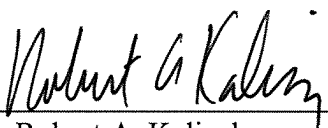
Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Carstens in view of Wood (U.S. Patent No. 5,733,145). This rejection is respectfully traversed, and the correctness of the rejection is not conceded.

Claim 20 is canceled herein. Reconsideration and removal of the rejection are therefore requested.

With these remarks, Applicants believe that the claims now pending are in a condition for allowance. Favorable consideration is respectfully requested. If any further questions arise, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 332-5300

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By: 
Name: Robert A. Kalinsky
Reg. No.: 50,471